



ARKANSAS

K-12 SCIENCE STANDARDS

EDUCATION FOR A NEW GENERATION



Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What is the process for revising and adopting content standards in Arkansas?

- The periodic review and revision of academic content standards is outlined in law and rule for the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE).
- The State Board of Education has endorsed the [Next Generation Science Standards](#) (NGSS) and the research behind these standards to guide the development of the Arkansas K-12 Science Standards.
- Committees of K-12 teachers and instructional facilitators, assisted by higher education content experts, will make recommendations to ADE for possible course pathways and grade-specific student performance expectations.
- More information about the work is available on the [Arkansas K-12 Science Standards page](#) on the [ADE website](#).

Q: What science standards are required to be taught?

[Arkansas Science Curriculum Frameworks](#), revised in 2005, will be taught until implementation of the new standards. A [timeline](#) is available on the [ADE website](#).

Q: What science assessments will be administered?

ADE will continue to administer the Science Benchmark Exam at Grades 5 and 7, the End-of-Course Biology Exam, and the Alternate Portfolio Assessments for Grades 5, 7, and 10. Information about these [assessments](#) is available on the [ADE website](#).

Q: When will the new standards be implemented?

Time is needed to allow Arkansas educators the opportunity to fully investigate the latest body of research on quality science education. A [timeline](#) spells out the projected dates for implementation.

Q: What are the Next Generation Science Standards?

NGSS are K-12 science standards that are rich in content and practice and designed to provide all students an internationally-benchmarked science education. The NGSS are based on *A Framework for K-12 Science Education*, which was published by the National Research Council, and is available as a free download ([Click here](#)). The National Research Council is a private, nonprofit institution that provides expert advice on some of the most pressing issues pertaining to science, engineering, and medicine. The final version of [NGSS](#) was released in April, 2013 and is available on the Web.

Q: Who was involved in the development process?

Arkansas was one of the 26 [lead states](#) that actively engaged in the development and review of the new standards. Writing and review teams consisted of K-12 teachers, higher education faculty, scientists, engineers, and business leaders. These teams were joined by several partner organizations, including the [National Research Council](#) (NRC), the [National Science Teachers Association](#) (NSTA), and the [American Association for the Advancement of Science](#) (AAAS).

Q: What are some of the strengths of the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS)?

NGSS offers all students learning opportunities and challenges to become more scientifically literate. NGSS makes connections across curriculum. NGSS provides a clear vision of rigorous science standards across K-12.

Q: Will science content be assessed on the Partnership for Assessment Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessments?

[PARCC](#) tests are computer-based K-12 assessments in Mathematics and English Language Arts/Literacy.



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Q: What can educators do to prepare for the transition to new science standards?

- Ensure that sufficient time is allotted in the school day for hands-on science instruction.
- Evaluate and inventory the science resources currently available to the school/district.
- Incorporate the practices and crosscutting concepts from *A Framework for K-12 Science Education* in current units of study. [Resources](#) are available from the NSTA. [Implementation resources](#) are available from the NGSS website.
- Increase collaboration within the science department and across disciplines in school/district.
- Participate in appropriate [Professional Development](#) around *A Framework for K-12 Science Education*.
- Utilize the science specialists at local educational cooperatives and/or university STEM centers for professional development offerings and school support.

Q. What is the best method for staying up-to-date with Arkansas' progress toward new science standards?

Information is available at

<http://www.arkansased.org/divisions/learning-services/curriculum-and-instruction/arkansas-k-12-science-standards>. In addition, information about the development of and transition to new science standards will be sent out through ADE's Curriculum and Instruction Listserv. To be added to the ADE CCSS ListServ, please send your name, e-mail address, and district name to ADE.CandI@arkansas.gov.

Q. When is the best time to purchase new science instructional materials?

There is currently a lack of high-quality NGSS-aligned instructional materials because the standards are so new. School districts are encouraged to be patient and wait for the adoption of the new Arkansas K-12 Science Standards. Tools will become available for school districts to use in the selection process. Check with local educational cooperatives and/or university STEM centers for instructional materials (including lab equipment and kits) that schools can check out.

For more information, please contact Michele Snyder, Science Specialist for Curriculum and Instruction

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